

## **November 25 Legislative Update**

### **US Army Corps of Engineers releases Draft Coastal Study Tentatively Selected Plan**

The following links (Ctrl+Click to access links) take you to the [Executive Summary, Draft Report, and Appendices](#). The Interactive Coastal Texas Study StoryMaps can be accessed here - <https://coastal-texas-hub-usace-swg.hub.arcgis.com/>

A **Virtual Public Information Session** will be held 6:00-8:00 pm on Wednesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. This is the second of such sessions that provide a brief introduction and overview of the Coastal Texas Study, the study website, and how to utilize the interactive StoryMaps. The difference between this session and the Virtual Public meetings listed below are in the Information Session is for information purposes only and provides for a Question & Answer period. Public comments are not taken in this forum.

**Virtual Public Meetings** continue to be a virtual forum to learn about the Draft Report and provide public comment. Public comments can also be provided by submitting written comments. ***Public comments are due by December 14, 2020.*** Persons interested in attending can register for one of the upcoming virtual public meetings listed below:

1. **December 3, 11 AM – 1 PM:**  
<https://hollowayecs.webex.com/hollowayecs/onstage/g.php?MTID=e497520a2300d742c31641eed000991d1>  
Join by phone: +1-408-418-9388 / Access code - 132 260 6311#
2. **December 3, 6 – 8 PM:**  
<https://hollowayecs.webex.com/hollowayecs/onstage/g.php?MTID=ecc8828665924de2bba88b7bf3edac5d3>  
Join by phone: +1-408-418-9388 / Access code - 132 196 7905#
3. **December 8, 11 AM – 1 PM:**  
<https://hollowayecs.webex.com/hollowayecs/onstage/g.php?MTID=ea94dc5a0910ce1b80ff4c636467e2cbc>  
Join by phone: +1-408-418-9388 / Access code - 132 880 5839#
4. **December 8, 6 – 8 PM:**  
<https://hollowayecs.webex.com/hollowayecs/onstage/g.php?MTID=eab06d3b96210ffb07f64cf375dfbfc1e>  
Join by phone: +1-408-418-9388 / Access code - 132 465 2914#

## **Austin Update**

### **TWIA Actuarial & Underwriting Committee Meets on Tuesday, December 1<sup>st</sup>**

The Texas Windstorm Insurance Association's (TWIA) Actuarial & Underwriting Committee will meet on Tuesday, December 1 to review updated information from an independent report on TWIA's rate adequacy and develop a report/recommendation to the Board of Directors. The agenda for the meeting is available [here](#). As required by statute, TWIA annually produces and publishes a rate adequacy analysis. The most recent [TWIA rate adequacy analysis](#), completed in July 2020, indicates that TWIA's current rates are inadequate by 44 percent for residential coverage and 49 percent for commercial coverage. At its September 22 meeting, the Committee reviewed an [independent report by consulting firm Willis Towers Watson](#) (WTW) on TWIA's rate adequacy and the use of hurricane modeling in estimating potential losses in its rate-setting process. The independent report indicated that TWIA's current rates are inadequate by 32 percent for residential coverage and 42 percent for commercial coverage. The Committee directed WTW and TWIA staff to work together to incorporate additional data into an updated report. Additional data requested by the Committee includes: commercial business occupancy data; secondary risk characteristics; and details from inspection reports. During the August 2020 meeting, the TWIA Board of Directors voted for the Association to file a 0 percent rate change in its annual required rate filing with the Texas Department of Insurance. Noting that TWIA may also make additional rate filings with Texas Department of Insurance at any time, the Board directed the Committee to review WTW's report and make a recommendation to the Board. At the December 1 meeting, the Committee will consider WTW's updated report and is expected to develop its report/recommendation to the TWIA Board. The TWIA Board may then consider the Committee's report/recommendation at its quarterly meeting on December 8. Members of the public can submit written comments via email at [PublicComment@TWIA.org](mailto:PublicComment@TWIA.org). Emailed comments received by **Sunday, November 29** will be compiled and provided to the Committee prior to the December 1 meeting. Members of the public are also invited to provide comment during the designated public comment portion of the meeting by logging on to the meeting via Zoom. Click [here](#) to register to attend the meeting via Zoom. The City of Galveston submitted the attached comment letter.

### **TX Senate Committee on State Affairs Hearing on Taxpayer-funded Lobbying – December 7, 2020**

Originally scheduled for a date in November, the Senate Committee on State Affairs will now hold a hearing on issues related to taxpayer-funded lobbying at 10:00 am on Monday, December 7, 2020 (see [Meeting Notice](#)). Specifically, the Committee will receive invited testimony only regarding the following Interim Charge:

*Study how governmental entities use public funds for political lobbying purposes. Examine what types of governmental entities use public funds for lobbying purposes. Make recommendations to protect taxpayers from paying for lobbyists who may not represent the taxpayers' interests.*

### **Texas House Speaker's Bipartisan COVID Group**

Presumptive Speaker Dade Phelan (R-Beaumont) has formed a bipartisan group to focus on legislative operations during the pandemic, headed by Rep. Tom Oliverson (R-Cypress) and Rep. Senfronia Thompson (D-Houston). The group will provide recommendations and guidance on House operations in the Capitol during the 2021 Session. Other members include: Briscoe Cain (R-Deer Park)

Charlie Geren (R-Fort Worth)  
Donna Howard (D-Austin)  
Stephanie Klick (R-Fort Worth)  
Joe Moody (D-El Paso)  
Chris Paddie (R-Marshall)  
John Smithee (R-Amarillo)  
Chris Turner (D-Grand Prairie)  
John Turner (D-Dallas)  
Armando Walle (D-Houston)

### **87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature Bills Filed Report**

Attached is a report highlights pre-filed bills of interest for Galveston. Please contact me if you have questions, concerns, or would like additional information about a particular bill.

## **Washington Update**

### **City of Galveston Keeps FTA Urbanized Area Status**

Through efforts made by U.S. Senator John Cornyn's office, the City of Galveston received confirmation from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that the City will continue to receive direct federal transit formula funding as an urbanized area (UZA) until September 30, 2021, including any addition CARES Act COVID-19 funding that may be appropriated by Congress. The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 restored the City of Galveston as an urbanized area for purposes of directly receiving FTA formula transit funds; however, this provision expired on September 30, 2020. In September, Congress passed legislation that extended authorization for federal surface transportation programs until September 30, 2021, this bill language simultaneously also extends the timeframe for Galveston's treatment as a UZA. Earlier in the year Rep. Randy Weber was successful in getting an amendment included in the House-passed INVEST Act, the multi-year transportation reauthorization legislation, to address Galveston's gap funding issue. However, the Senate took no action on the INVEST Act.

### **Bipartisan Legislation Introduced to ID, Address Blocked Railroad Crossings**

Senator Jerry Moran (R-Kan.), a member of the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Transportation and Safety, joined Senators Deb Fischer (R-Neb.), Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and Gary Peters (D-Mich.) to introduce legislation (S. that would increase data collection efforts and requirements necessary to address blocked railroad crossings. According to Moran, in December of 2019, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) posted its [Blocked Crossing Incident Reporter portal](#) where the public and law enforcement could report blocked grade crossings to the agency. The legislation would authorize the FRA's blocked crossing portal as a three-year pilot program, ensuring the continuation of data collection. FRA would be required to analyze submissions to the portal based on key criteria and provide an analysis to Congress. By authorizing the blocked crossing portal and examining results, Congress can better understand the scope and severity of blocked crossings and develop targeted and effective policies to address them. The collection of data on blocked crossings will assist Congress with

developing policies that will make America's roads more safe and convenient. The bill also requires the Federal Highway Administration to evaluate the requirements of the Section 130 Railway-Highway Grade Crossing Program to identify any more flexibilities in the program that could support states' efforts to make grade crossings safer. While action is unlikely for the closing days of the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress at the end of the year, this legislation will likely return when the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress takes up infrastructure and surface transportation reauthorization legislation in 2021.

### **FEMA Releases Fact Sheet on Vaccine Planning, Including Public Assistance and Title 32 Eligibility**

On Thursday the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) released a fact sheet entitled [Vaccination Planning FAQ](#). The fact sheet outlines how the federal government is coordinating support for COVID-19 vaccination across departments and agencies, sources of available federal funding for vaccines, eligibility of costs incurred by state, tribal and territorial governments for FEMA Public Assistance, insurance reimbursement, and requesting Direct Federal Assistance. Specifically, the fact sheet states that "vaccine distribution and administration activities are also an allowable activity under existing Title 32 Mission Assignments to Department of Defense for Title 32 National Guard Deployments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic until the President's authorization expires."

### **FHA Proposes Private Flood Insurance Option for Single Family Mortgages**

The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) recently [published](#) a [proposed rule](#) that allows a private flood insurance option instead of insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) when flood insurance is required. The proposed changes would allow lenders to begin accepting private flood insurance policies for single family insured loans for homes located in Federal Emergency Management Agency-designated Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs). Part of the rule is a proposal to institute a compliance aid for private flood insurance policies, allowing lenders to rely on the compliance aid to determine if a private flood insurance policy meets FHA's requirements. Public comments on the proposed rule are due by January 22, 2021.

## **Reports of Interest**

### **Federal-Aid Highways:**

[States and Local Governments Reported Benefits to Federal Highway Fund Swapping, but Impacts Cannot be Definitively Determined](#)

GAO-21-88, October 20

### **5G Wireless:**

[Capabilities and Challenges for an Evolving Network](#)

GAO-21-26SP, November 24